

February 4, 2003

State of Alaska
Local Boundary Commission
550 W 7th Avenue – Suite 1790
Anchorage, Alaska 99051

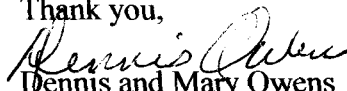

Re: Proposed formation of Prince of Wales Island Borough

We would like to go on record as opposing the formation of a Prince of Wales Island Borough. We have been wading through the incorporation standards, the CS for Senate Bill #48, and the Application of Borough Incorporation Standards Chapter 3. We feel a closer look at the statistics for Southeast Alaska and in particular Prince of Wales is necessary. Our declining population and unemployment rate is higher than stated. Too many groups of people are exempt from the future taxation: senior citizens and Native corporations on the Island and transient workers. This will put a greater burden on the rest of the taxpayers. There is an estimated 39.9% of the adult population is not working. Where is the tax base to support and maintain a Prince of Wales Borough? The closure of the Cold Storage Plant in Craig and the closure of the log sort facility in Thorne Bay along with constructions jobs with South Coast is proof of the struggling economy of the Island. The estimated per capita household income is \$18,359 well below the poverty level.

We have chosen Prince of Wales Island as our home. However, we live in an unroaded area and that should not change in the foreseeable future. It is easier for me to get into Ketchikan to do business than it is Craig. We fly to Ketchikan, as it is cheaper than flying to Craig. If we are incorporated into a borough, what will it do for us except cost money? We have the State Troopers when needed. The roads on the Island do not connect all the communities and many of us do not want them to connect. This keeps the Island residents isolated from one another so it would not be a working borough for all.

There are many reasons we oppose the formation of a Prince of Wales Borough but the economic factors are the most pressing. Until the funding of a Borough can be done in a fair and equitable manner without further hardship on the residents of the Island, there should be no borough formed.

Thank you,

 
Dennis and Mary Owens
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Cc: Representative Albert Kookesh
Senator Georgianna Lincoln